

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 6099
TO BE ANSWERED ON: 01.04.2026

CATCH GRANT PROGRAM

6099. SHRI SRIBHARAT MATHUKUMILLI:

Will the Minister of ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of the total number of proposals received under the Cancer AI & Technology Challenge (CATCH) Grant Programme till date along with a State and category-wise breakdown of these applications;
- (b) whether the Government is taking any steps to prioritize proposals focused on early detection and mass screening over other categories under this grant;
- (c) the mechanisms put in place to evaluate the operational readiness and scalability of pilot projects for wider deployment for those awarded the additional grant of up to Rs. one crore;
- (d) whether the Government is planning to scale up successful pilot projects under this scheme;
- (e) if so, the details of steps likely to be taken by the Government to ensure that these solutions are seamlessly integrated into the existing clinical workflows of public health systems; and
- (f) whether the Government has taken any steps to monitor the ethical and responsible use of cancer patients data by the projects sanctioned under the CATCH Grant Programme and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(SHRI JITIN PRASADA)

(a) to (f): India's AI strategy is based on the Hon'ble Prime Minister's vision to democratize the use of technology. It aims to address India centric challenges, create economic and employment opportunities for all Indians.

The Government approved the IndiaAI Mission on 7th March 2024. The Mission is built on seven pillars focused on compute access, foundational models, datasets, talent development, startups and industry partnerships, development of applications, and ethical AI. These efforts aim to build a self-reliant and globally competitive AI ecosystem in the country.

Impactful AI solutions are being promoted and developed under IndiaAI Mission to address major societal challenges, including in healthcare.

IndiaAI–NCG Cancer AI & Technology Challenge (CATCH) has been launched in collaboration with the National Cancer Grid. The partnership supports joint proposals from AI

innovators and clinical institutions for development and validation of AI solutions across the cancer care continuum.

The initiative addresses the critical gaps across the cancer care continuum in a balanced and impact-oriented manner. It provides grant support and access to clinical validation environments, thereby enabling real-world testing, scale-up and adoption of AI tools in public health settings.

A total of **299 proposals** were received under the Cancer AI & Technology Challenge (CATCH) Grant challenge from a wide range of stakeholders including startups, academic institutions, healthcare providers, and industry participants across the country.

Following a rigorous multi-stage evaluation process, **10 solutions have been selected** for grant support. These selected proposals represent diverse thematic areas across the cancer care continuum and reflect a broad-based participation from different regions and categories.

The CATCH grant was conducted across 7 priority tracks viz. Screening, Diagnostics, Clinical Treatment, Patient Engagement, Research Enablement, Operational Efficiency, Data Curation.

The evaluation framework does not exclusively prioritize any single category. Instead, proposals are assessed holistically based on their potential for clinical impact, scalability, innovation, and alignment with national health priorities.

The Programme incorporates a structured, phased support mechanism to assess and strengthen the operational readiness and scalability of selected solutions.

In the initial phase, selected teams are provided grant support of up to ₹50 lakh per solution, disbursed in milestone-linked tranches, to enable development, validation, and pilot deployment.

Based on demonstrated performance, selected solutions may be considered for an enhanced grant support of up to ₹1 crore per solution for scale-up. The evaluation framework includes technical assessment, clinical validation in collaboration with relevant institutions, and real-world pilot testing.

The Government envisages that successful solutions emerging from the Programme will be progressively scaled through appropriate institutional partnerships and integration pathways.

The scale-up approach will be guided by evidence generated during pilot deployments, clinical validation outcomes, and alignment with national and state-level health system priorities.

Efforts are being undertaken to ensure that solutions developed under the Programme are aligned with existing clinical workflows and public health systems. This includes engagement with relevant stakeholders to facilitate interoperability, adherence to clinical standards, and integration within healthcare delivery settings, subject to validation and regulatory considerations.

The Government places strong emphasis on the ethical and responsible use of health data. Appropriate safeguards are being incorporated within the Programme design, including

adherence to applicable data protection frameworks, anonymization protocols, and oversight mechanisms during data collection, model development, and deployment stages.

All approved projects must submit a study protocol to the Institutional Ethics Committee (IEC) of the participating hospital or institution. IEC clearance is mandatory prior to the release of funds and project commencement. Upon receipt of IEC approval, selected teams will receive a formal grant award letter.
